

**Community Struggle and
Political Repression in
Eloxochitlán de Flores
Magón: The Case of Miguel
Peralta Betanzos**

This pamphlet is meant to share one of the cases of repression in the territory of so-called Mexico. It is made up of texts that introduce some of the problems suffered in the community of Eloxochitlán de Flores Magón, Oaxaca, due to the introduction of political parties, the logic of democracy, and the mechanisms of state control. We also include some writings done by prisoner Miguel Peralta Betanzos, who together with others of the community assembly, have been incarcerated in different prisons in Oaxaca.

<http://solidaridad-eloxochitlan.esplvblogs.net>

—

Fire to the prisons!!!

This pamphlet is printed in an artistic manner,
in different places and by different means. It is
thus impossible to count or estimate its
number.

Mexico City, Mexico
2017

**Community Struggle and Political Repression in
Eloxochitlán de Flores Magón.**

The Case of Miguel Peralta Betanzos

**English Edition
Mexico City
2017**

Community Struggle and Political Repression in
Eloxochitlán de Flores Magón: The Case of Miguel
Peralta Betanzos

1st Edition: August 2015 (Spanish)
Expanded and Edited Edition: November 2015
2nd Edition: August 2016
1st English Edition: December 2017

Produced by those in solidarity with the Community
Assembly: brothers and sisters, friends and *compañerxs*
of Miguel Peralta Betanzos

The complete or partial reproduction of this text is
encouraged.
Spread freely. Expand the ideas.

Solidarity and camaraderie with our imprisoned
compañerxs!
Down with the prison walls!
For the destruction of the carceral society!
Fire to the prisons!

For more information visit the page:
<http://solidaridad-eloxochitlan.espivblogs.net/>

Contact the *compañerxs* by writing to:
solidaridadelox@gmail.com
FB: Miguel Peralta Libre

However, it is worrisome to know that it will be
that same judge and that same court that will
dictate the sentence. We know that at all cost,
as they have done up until now, they will try to
maintain our incarceration and the persecution
of our *compañeros*.

For now, with these lines I share with you all, I
share the courage to know that the country is
collapsing not only for questions of nature, but
because in itself, there is a rotten and
decomposed system, that likes to organize pain.
There isn't anything to stop their lies, their
abuse...but we tell them again that we don't
believe them, that
we don't trust them and that we will continue
struggling and resisting until they cease to
exist.

Solidarity with the brotherly peoples!
Miguel Peralta Betanzos
September 2017

came with the witnesses and police. They too were allowed to be inside the courthouse (contrary to what happened with those who came to accompany us who were located a block beneath the courthouse, as they were not allowed inside). These various peoples tried to provoke and intimidate us—our lawyers as well as my *compañero* prisoners and I—as we were the only ones that were allowed in the hearing. However, and in spite of listening to so many lies and observing the staged performance, our interest was focused on the interrogations, after having waited for so long for these people to come to the hearing, we could not allow them to cancel it.

I would have liked to been able to record everything that happened in the hearing; the great staging of lies, blackmail, manipulation, complicity, abuse of power and corruption that we observed for more than 11 hours. But those hours have translated to almost three years that we have lived inside this legal farce...and the years before 2014 where the history is the same, in the same court. Still, with all of the support that they have given to the witnesses to accommodate their responses, they failed to substantiate their declarations, as they are based in lies, in acts that didn't happen.

Table of Contents:

Introduction.....	[7]
The Struggle for Autonomy in Eloxochitlán de Flores Magón.....	[9]
The Community Assembly of Eloxochitlán de Flores Magón, Oaxaca and Their Struggle for Autonomy.....	[21]
Statement of Pedro Peralta After His Release.....	[28]
Letter From Herminio Monfil.....	[32]
Detention of Miguel Peralta Betanzos....	[34]
Brothers and Sisters, Are you Alive? Writings From Prison	
From the Tlaxiaco Prison, Letter from May 4 th , 2015.....	[41]
This System is Rotten.....	[45]
Cua_á, Ñany Tecurú? Are You Alive Brothers and Sisters?.....	[47]
We Already Understand.....	[48]
Letter to the Assembly.....	[49]
Random Notes From June 2015.....	[52]
One Day More is One Day Less.....	[55]
Our Favorite Pastime	[58]
To the Informal Coordination of Prisoners in Resistance.....	[60]
11 Anti-Prison Letters.....	[62]

Regarding the New Arrests.....	[63]
Anti-Prison Calaverita.....	[66]
The Drop (Story).....	[69]
What is Time When We Spend it All in Jail?.....	[76]
Compas, Are You There? Are You Still Alive?.....	[78]
Xita Ndayá (poem).....	[80]
October 2nd.....	[81]
94 Years After the Assassination of Ricardo Flores Magón.....	[83]
Recent Developments:	
Three More Years of Harassment and Abuse of Power in San Antonio Eloxochitlán de Flores Magón, Oaxaca...	[85]
Call For a Day of Resistance.....	[91]
Statement Regarding the August 2nd, 2017 Court Hearing.....	[94]
Denunciation of the Judicial Process of the Political Prisoners of the Assembly of Eloxochitlán de Flores Magón.....	[100]

responses. Furthermore, he was there to disrupt the hearing, to find whatever excuse to scold the defense; for example, for bringing water into the courthouse, or for their physical movements that he thought represented an insult.

On this occasion, the court clerk and the public prosecutor participated (as social representatives of the “supposed aggrieved party”). Along with the judge, these two functionaries on multiple occasions focused on the responses, trying to accommodate what the witnesses had already said, to be congruent with the ministerial declaration or to make sense of responses. Supposedly, neither the public prosecutor nor the court clerk can participate in the answers, but in our hearing it seemed that was their job. And yes, that was their designed job, not beneath the law or codes of procedure, but in the interests of the Zepeda family.

These three people—the judge, the public prosecutor and the court clerk—together with two men that didn’t identify themselves, and the bodyguards of Elisa Zepeda and the police, tried in distinct ways to cancel the hearing. It was only evident that the two unidentified men

with sticks and machetes to the courthouse. With this, their refusal to arrive was because their physical well-being was in danger; something completely false. The judge has already, in every moment, guaranteed their security and assured the necessary conditions for their presentation, such as not allowing the presence of our families in the courthouse, in spite of the hearings supposedly being public.

Finally, on September 22nd, four of the six witnesses who had been summoned came to the courthouse—the only evidence that supports the false accusations. During the course of the interrogations, the complicity that exists between the functionaries of the court and the Zepeda family was again evident. During the almost 13 hours of interrogation, it was visible that the judge is part of this game and simulation of justice. He was not present during all of the hearing. He only appeared when he had to confirm the legality and illegality of the prepared questions. That is to say, to discard the questions and not carry them out because in his opinion they were loaded and incongruous. That is also to say that this is one of the most blatant examples of corruption and influence, or the “supplying” of textbook

Mexico has a long history of socio-political conflicts, the majority of which derive from the relation between politics and ethnicity. For a long time, Indigenous peoples have remained marginalized in the political arena, which only manifests itself in the electoral struggle of political parties.

The case of the community of Eloxochitlán, as is the case of many others in the country, reflects a conflict generated by the imposition of “how things must be done” and the forms that are freely chosen by the people who live them.

To provide a backdrop to the conflict that since 2010 has plagued the community, we share the following article published by *Subversiones. Agencia Autónoma de comunicación*, from May 13th of 2015.



imprisonment and the others still persecuted by orders of apprehension.

On this occasion, the state police did not have any excuse and were forced to transport us from our prisons, to our hearing at the courthouse in Huautla, scheduled for ten in the morning. While the travel is nothing dignified or comfortable, to see the water running between the mountains reproducing community life, strengthens us. We arrived punctually at the hearing to remove the truth from the rubble of injustice.



Our first impression was the presence of a large number of state, ministerial and municipal police located both outside and inside the courthouse, as well as groups of men that work with the imposed municipal president, Elisa Zepeda. Like on the other occasions we have denounced, she has been bothered that our families and members of the community assembly accompany us to each hearing, where she and her family members who serve as witnesses had previously failed to arrive. This includes their latest strategy to justify their contempt of the multiple judicial warrants, by utilizing a paid notice in the newspaper lying again that our family members come armed

*Denunciation of the Judicial Process of the
Political Prisoners of the Assembly of
Eloxochitlán de Flores Magón*

With everything and amidst everything...two disasters, thousands of realities...solidarity with the brotherly peoples!

With the urgency to bring down these walls and be able to support, in whatever way...we continue!

Nearly three years ago began this process filled with irregularities, both in the penal case, as well as in the actions of the officials in charge of imparting this circus of justice. After those called judges, magistrates, public prosecutors, and court clerk, insisted and demanded the appearance of the witnesses for interrogation, on September 22nd four witnesses came to the courthouse. These four people are key in the indictment and fabricated accusations against the *compañerxs* of the community assembly, those of us who have maintained our resistance from

Eloxochitlán de Flores Magón, the birthplace of the Mexican anarchist Ricardo Flores Magón, is a municipality of approximately 5,000 inhabitants located in the Cañada region of the state of Oaxaca. The municipality of Eloxochitlán, as is the case in nearly two-thirds of the municipalities in the state of Oaxaca, is governed under *usos y costumbres* or the normative system of governance of Indigenous communities.

Every three years the elections of the municipal authorities and the representatives of the various neighborhoods take place. The community is made up of 24 neighborhoods and two municipal agencies. Municipal agents are elected through the *usos y costumbres* for a one-year period; among their principal function is the representation of their agency inside the local government and to serve as advisors regarding issues of the community. The general assembly is the organ that makes decisions, which is done by means of direct voting through raised hands. The difference

*The Struggle for Autonomy in Eloxochitlán
de Flores Magón*

from other municipalities of the state of Oaxaca is that in Eloxochitlán women also participate in the making of decisions.

Political Party Interference

In the beginning of 2010—with the upcoming community elections in November of that year—political parties began to interfere in the communal process. In clear violation of the traditional forms of decision-making in the community, votes were bought and coerced, in an attempt to gain support from the community. These were just some of the actions undertaken by political parties and their representatives seeking to win the elections.

After the defeat of Eviel Pérez Magaña, PRI candidate for governor of the State under the political party coalition “*Unidos por la Paz y el Progreso*”, Manuel Zepeda, PRI member originally from Eloxochitlán, was taken in by the political party *Convergencia* to seek the municipal presidency. This was undertaken by the buying of votes and alliances made with neighborhood leaders. He triumphed in the assembly in a form foreign to the traditional forms of decision-making, only receiving a third of the votes.

Miguel Peralta, Prisoner in Cuicatlán
Los otros abogados
Families and Friends of the Prisoners of
Eloxochitlán de Flores Magón
July 30th, 2017

another lie with which she tries to justify her absence in the process and the lack of justice for our *compañeros*, as she has not once attended a hearing.

The people that attend the hearings, the majority adults and grandparents, never have brought a stick or machete. What they have brought are plates of food to share with the *compañeros* (which has been witnessed by the staff of the court themselves) and the hope that they will see their *compañeros* back in their homes. We demand that the lies stop and that she presents herself in court—a court protected by men contracted with firearms that circle the area trying to intimidate those in attendance. We demand that she attend with the others that have to be questioned and not stall the process any longer.

Lastly, we call on all of the people that would like to verify, and especially the media outlet that published the article, the circus the hearings have become and the lack of interest of the authorities of the court to advance on the case that keeps our *compañeros* imprisoned and persecuted. We invite you to see with your own eyes what is happening...

The nonconforming parts requested their integration into the municipal council—as is the tradition in the community, where the second and third place in the voting form part of the government with the winning candidate—but were refused integration by the elected candidate. The nonconformists turned to the general secretary of government of the state of Oaxaca (SEGEGO) and the competent authorities, from whom they did not receive a favorable response. Thus began a post-electoral conflict with the rise of the community assembly that carried out demonstrations as a means to have their traditional decision-making forms, as well as their integration into the municipal council, respected.

On December 31st of that year, and in the context of the post-electoral conflict, Eusebio Morales Alfaro, the outgoing municipal president, decided not to hand over power to Manuel Zepeda. This resulted in the closure of the municipal palace and a two-day takeover of the highway *Puente de Fierro* which connects the population of Teotitlán de Flores Magón and Huautla.

Due to the lack of agreement with Manuel Zepeda, and the mobilizations carried out against him lead by members of the community assembly, the SEGEGO called the factions to dialogue for a supposed integration that would bring an end to the post-electoral conflict. However, this dialogue was a setup to suffocate the movement of the assembly. The false dialogue transformed into orders of detention against members of the community assembly. Jaime Betanzos Fuentes, member of the negotiating committee, was arrested and transferred to the maximum security prison in Miahuatlán. This caused a total break with the dialogue between the community assembly and the state government.

A Repressive Government

A week after the detention of Jaime Betanzos and the ending of dialogue, a police operation was carried out by the three levels of government in the community to “reestablish order”. In this operation, illegal searches were carried out in some of the houses of members of the community assembly.

This however was not enough to curb the demand for the liberation of Jaime Betanzos, nor the organization of the assembly itself. For

present. It is important to mention that the hearings are public and it is the only manner in which some of the family members, due to their age, economic situation and distance, can see their *compañeros*. As it stands, four of them are in Ixcotel, a prison that is located more than five hours from Eloxochitlán, and one in Cuicatlán, that is three hours from the community.

It is worth mentioning that following the release of the other six *compañerxs* that were prisoners in the same case and have since left prison, Elisa Zepeda has followed in her father’s footsteps. Presenting herself as a human rights defender and currently holding the position of municipal president of Eloxochitlán, she has benefited from the presidency. She has used municipal money to pay court fees and has used municipal police to threaten family members of *compañeros* who remain with arrest warrants against them in the same case.

Furthermore, through a note she bought in the newspaper, Elisa stated: “When I have to go to the court to testify as part of the trial, an opposition group also goes with sticks and machetes intimidating me from the outside. The situation worries me dearly”. This is

during this time have not enacted these measures. The fact that they have not fulfilled their court order has lengthened the judicial process, above all maintaining our *compañeros* imprisoned for nearly three years. Clearly, the sole purpose of these delay tactics is to tire out our *compañeros* and their families, as the hearings are scheduled more or less every two months, and we have to wait all of that time while the “witnesses” do not even present themselves, much less “legally” justify their absence.

In the last hearing on May 23rd, after the *compañeros* demanded their release in front of the judge making clear the irregularities with which the process has been carried out, he promised to do “everything in his capacity and inside of the law” to have these people present. That is to say, according to the means of limitation that already correspond to their number of absences, they would be arrested for 72 hours to ensure their presence. As on past occasions, where these arrests were supposed to be made, we again do not expect them to happen. What he also did was intimidate the relatives and friends accompanying the prisoners, making it known that for the following hearing, they did not want people

example, communal work projects known as *tequios* or *faenas*—the cleaning of streets and highways and the delimitation of territories between neighboring municipalities—among other forms of communal organization continued. On February 13, 2011, after spreading the word inviting people to the *tequio* of the 14th for the freedom of Betanzos, a group of approximately ten members of the community assembly were intercepted, beaten and threatened by the municipal president Manuel Zepeda, together with a violent group supported by the municipal police.

The following morning during the work of the *faena*, around ten members of the assembly that clean the highway to Santa Cruz, were brutally beaten by a violent group lead again by Manuel Zepeda and his son. This was carried out with the clear objective of dismantling the organization to eliminate whatever obstacle present to the government of Manuel Zepeda.

A few days later, on February 25th, Jaime Betanzos was freed due to the irregularities in the process and the lack of evidence that associated him with a crime.

On the following March 20th, the community assembly again reunited with the objective to put an end to the post-electoral conflict. They asked the municipal president for the integration of the municipal council that would take into account the majority of the population. The response to their petition was repression by Manuel Zepeda and his violent group, who armed with sticks, pipes, stones and firearms, attacked members of the assembly again leaving various people injured.

Amidst this environment of uncontrolled repression and violence from the municipal president and his violent group, on April 8th a cargo truck was burned. The truck belonged to the organization *Unión de Comunidades Campesinas Marginadas (UCOCAM)* which was formed by members of the community assembly.

On May 30th, after returning from a *tequio*, members of the assembly were intercepted again by Manuel Zepeda and his violent group at the location *Agua de Máscara*. Genâro Gómez González, Daniel Romero Pérez, and Roberto Pineda Monfil were detained, beaten and tortured for the simple act of being active members of the assembly. These actions were

charge of maintaining the judicial and political context in the Mazateca community since 2012.

In spite of each one of the people having been notified, only two of them, Manuel Zepeda and his brother Vicente Zepeda, have fulfilled their questioning. This came after various forms of pressure, and was carried out the same day that they arrived in court to sign papers to be prosecuted for the crime of torture (they have gone at the end of each month for more than a year). This crime has been reclassified again to “injuries and abuse of authority” due to irregularities in the process. These processes are the result of an ambush they carried out together with others (including the husband of Elisa Zepeda) against members of the community assembly. The ambush took place on November 20th, 2012, when members of the community assembly were headed to Mexico City for a political action for the anniversary of the death of Ricardo Flores Magón.

Up until now, the other six have not appeared in court. As a result, urgent measures have been promoted such as fines for them all or their presentation in court using police force. However, the three judges that have passed through the Mixed Court of Huautla de Jiménez

Miguel Peralta
Cuicatlán, Oaxaca
4/19/17

**Statement Regarding the August
2nd, 2017 Court Hearing**

Once again, on August 2nd, a hearing is scheduled for five of the seven prisoners of the community assembly of Eloxochitlán de Flores Magón.

After two years and seven months since the judicial process began for the first detainees, we continue in the testimonial stage, where the only thing that keeps our *compañeros* incarcerated are the testimonies of eight people. On more than seven occasions, these people have made excuses so as not to be questioned in court, thus preventing the end of this particular stage in the case. It is worth mentioning that some of these declarations are of people that were not in the vicinity of the events—that is to say their declarations are hearsay. Other declarations are textual copies of others, and at least six of the eight are family members and/or sympathizers with Manuel Zepeda Cortés and his daughter, Elisa Zepeda Lagunas. These two have been in

to be settled in a complaint brought to the Public Prosecutors Office and the Commission of the Joint Regional Office of Human Rights of Huautla de Jiménez. This settlement never prospered.

Plundering of Resources and Nepotism

The period in which Manuel Zepeda and his family exercised power with authoritarianism and repression, was also the period which began a change in the course of natural resources and economics of the municipality. Zepeda favored the extraction of sand, gravel and rock from the river to benefit his own businesses and those of his family. Some examples are the construction company under the name of his son-in-law, David Tello, another company of stone materials under the name of his wife, and yet another under the name of his brother, Vicente Zepeda. He also granted public positions to his family members, designating his son Manuel as director of logistics and maintenance of the community, and his daughter Elisa Zepeda as director of DIF (National System for Integral Family Development) and consultant of municipal development. Without the request for bids, he assigned projects to his own companies—a practice contrary to the traditional procedures

of the town, but very similar to the manner in which political parties operate.

In June of 2011, Hurricane Beatriz battered the state of Oaxaca causing serious damage in the Sierra Mazateca and in the community of Eloxochitlán. There were dozens of victims and enormous damage to the crops and to the cattle of the community. Some members of the population thought the damage was a consequence of the extraction projects in the river, because its path was modified due to the removal of stone and sand that before served as the natural barrier of the riverbed.

After this tragedy, Civil Protection was present in the community taking stock of the damages together with the municipal president and delivering resources to help the affected families. These resources were only given to his supporters, while the members of the community assembly were excluded from the distribution.

The Witch Hunt

During 2012, a witch-hunt against members of the assembly was unleashed and dozens of crimes were fabricated to justify arrest orders

paintings, calls to the judge of Huautla (#012363780324), political events or whatever else—something to make yourselves seen and your voices heard, that we are fed up and that we demand freedom for the political prisoners of Oaxaca and the world. We also demand a safe return to their homes, of those still being persecuted and displaced.

Finally, I want to send greetings to all of those that have been present in these two long years and a special thanks to the collective “*Los Otros Abogados*”, that have highlighted the mockery and cynicism of this supposed justice. Solidarity to the hunger strike of the political prisoners of Palestine in Israel, and with the Nahua and Purépecha communities of Michoacán!

Freedom to Eloxochitlán de Flores Magón,
Oaxaca
Freedom to Roque Coca and Alvaro Sebastián
Freedom to the prisoners of Tlanixco and el Amate
Freedom to Fernando Bárcenas, Luis Fernando Sotelo, Abraham Cortés
Freedom to the Prisoners in Struggle
Prisoners to the Streets

makes us another number in their statistics, trying to standardize our consciousness, decorating the archives and dusty files with new concepts (that in the end fuck you if you do not enter into their reforms). It is not enough to confirm your innocence but you furthermore must adapt to their manner of living, always submissive to them. However, inside of us, we have that drop we call freedom that will never be converted into a law, nor will ever be reformed.

As long as impunity continues to govern as it does in Eloxochitlán de Flores Magón, we will search ways to resist and organize ourselves, to bring down those who are believed to be untouchable, those that act as defenders of the community whom produce news with stolen money. While in the community they only feed their egos, their stories and their methods of repression, imposing themselves with threats and clubs to those that they supposedly “defend and represent”...

As part of this daily resistance, this April 30th we invite people, collectives and those who desire to join in a day of denunciation and demand for our freedom using the means of communication. We propose banners,

against them. Some fled the community while others sought protection.

Some months later, Hurricane Ernesto hit the Sierra Mazateca. While surveying the damages, members of the community assembly were ambushed by at least 30 men lead by the municipal president and accompanied by the municipal police. Without warning, they initiated an aggression against the population. This event lead to the detention of Pedro Peralta, who was held incommunicado and tortured for more than seven hours, before being transferred to the prison of Cuicatlán. He was charged with carrying a firearm meant exclusively for military use (a federal crime), carrying a firearm while belonging to an aggressive group, along with “damages and injury”.

He remains imprisoned in Cuicatlán and his legal process has been plagued with irregularities. It is worth noting that the municipal policeman Feliciano Margarito Suárez, who served as commander when Pedro was detained, alleged in a report dated October 13th, that he was forced to sign the informative report, and the weapon presented in possession of Pedro Peralta was planted. The conclusions

of these reports have not arrived to the eighth judge where his legal process is being carried out. These conclusions are necessary to end the process so the judge can dictate the sentence.

The judge of the mixed jurisdiction court of Huautla de Jiménez, Modesto Isaías Santiago Martínez, reclassified the crime of torture and injury against Pedro, but at the same time reactivated the arrest orders against members of the assembly. The National Human Rights Commission (CNDH) never submitted the protective measures despite the evidence of torture ruled in the opinion of the Attorney General's Office. They concluded that Pedro's process violated the Istanbul Protocol.

Mobilizations for the freedom of Pedro didn't wait. Members of the community assembly began a political and media campaign to denounce the case and demand his freedom. Social mobilizations, information in free and independent media, leaflets and paintings, are just some of the actions that were carried out to which the police responded again with repression. On November 20th, 2012, in front of a group of police, Manuel Zepeda attacked Leonides Fernández. She would not remove

This April 30th will mark two years of my detention and confinement. Two long years that I could narrate to you: in instants, hours, minutes, nights and days of anxiety, of impotence, of hatred of the state and its functionaries. Two long years of an everyday that wears on me, in the individualism that we are forced to reproduce (which I hate), and in the necessities and sicknesses that the prison walls generate in us. Lost time? No. Not in the company of the *compas* in solidarity, in daily resistance, in shared lessons. Not with the support of those that I didn't know, including those whom I don't know personally but that I know through a smile, in not forgetting to see the new sun and to dream, in the rejection of total control.

It is well known that the official justice system does not work for the people. The despotic political class makes us believe that it dispenses justice, making its reforms at its own convenience, classifying us as criminals, terrorists or enemies. It

Sincerely,
Members of the Community Assembly Ricardo
Flores Magón
1/20/17

propaganda outside her house demanding the liberation of Pedro Peralta and naming culpable the municipal president for the violent acts that had occurred the previous months in the community.

That same night a caravan was organized to leave for Mexico City to commemorate the anniversary of the death of Ricardo Flores Magón. Before leaving, the caravan was intercepted by a violent group, municipal police, and Manuel Zepeda. Dozens were injured, including children, elderly, and the journalist Fernando Palacios. This action was reported in an alert by the organization Article 19 (dedicated to the protection and defense of journalists and the liberty of expression). It is worth mentioning that in spite of the evidence, the delegate of the Attorney General's Office in Oaxaca has not issued arrest orders against those responsible for the attack. In the following days, a human rights organization from Oaxaca submitted recommendations to the municipal president and protective measures in favor of the injured. Days after, a dialogue was initiated between the government of Oaxaca, the municipal president, and those of the community assembly who were affected.

However, this dialogue never took place, the protective measures were not considered, and justice has not been served.

Institute of Citizen Participation of the State of Oaxaca (IEEPCO) to challenge these acts taking stock of the inconsistencies of this election and asking for its annulment. The community assembly solicits new elections in agreement with the *usos y costumbres* of the Indigenous community—an election where a true majority of the people in the community participate.

However, the directors of the Electoral Institute of Citizen Participation in Oaxaca (IEEPCO) have ignored these anomalies, validating the election on July 24th, 2016, authorizing Elisa Zepeda Lagunas as municipal president. On November 1st of last year, Elisa Zepeda Lagunas was again recognized as president elect of the three-year period 2017-2019. The community assembly does not conform to these results and has put forth another complaint to the federal electoral tribunal with headquarters in Xalapa, Veracruz. Regardless, on December 30th of last year, Elisa Zepeda Lagunas was officially sworn in as municipal president. It is important to note that in the analysis of these acts, bribery prevails with the authorities co-signing the official documents. Thus, as a consequence, the municipality remains divided and in dispute, while concord and peace is negated.

***The Community Assembly of Eloxochitlán
de Flores Magón, Baraca and Their
Struggle for Autonomy***

Manuel Zepeda Cortes manipulated the interim president Juan Salazar Hernández during the two remaining years of his period of 2014-2016, in order to organize the new elections for the three years of 2017-2019 without following the protocols of the rights of the Indigenous peoples. In doing this, he imposed his daughter Elisa Zepeda Lagunas, fulfilling his thirst for municipal power. This election was carried out on the first Sunday of April, when in the previous years it has taken place in the second week of September. Without the majority validating the election, and without taking into account other contenders, only 450 people gathered, when in past elections more than 2300 voters have participated. In the official documents, some 1400 voters are said to have participated, thus proving the falsification of signatures of citizens who weren't present. To make matters worse, Elisa Zepeda Lagunas is not originally from this municipality and doesn't speak Mazateco, whereas some 90% of the municipality does.

These acts have taken advantage of the climate of uncertainty and persecution against the members of the community assembly. The *compañerxs* of the community assembly registered complaints before the Electoral

Since 2010, the community ties of Eloxochitlán have been torn by the ambition for power of the cacique Manuel Zepeda Cortés. To achieve his ends and maintain autocratic power in the municipality, he has turned to political parties, opposed to the community assembly. The assembly rather is a space of debate and decision-making in the community, where the political legitimacy of the municipality lies.

Because the community assembly is opposed to the personal power of the cacique and his family, the force of repression has been directed toward its participants. More than 23 of the assembly members have arrest orders, and after more than five years of conflict, more than 15 people have been incarcerated. All of these people have been criminalized for defending communal forms of electing representatives, for denouncing the embezzlement of public funds carried out by Manuel Zepeda Cortés, for preventing the

imposition of the political party system in Eloxochitlán, as well as for defending their natural resources from the private interests of Manuel Zepeda and his businesses.

Manuel Zepeda Cortés (ex-municipal president) and his daughter Elisa Zepeda (current municipal president) have used their institutional power for their own wealth and privileges. The complicity of the political parties of the “left” like the *Partido de la Revolución Democrática* and the *Partido de Trabajo* are key to understanding the impunity of these actions. Without any repercussions, they have used political resources to condition the rights of the people. They have supported the military presence in the community and acts of harassment through the continuous aggression and torture carried out by violent people dressed as municipal police. These violent acts have taken place in coordination with local deputies, authorities of other entities of the country, judges, and of NGO’s (*Consortio para el Diálogo Parlamentario* and *la Equidad de Oaxaca*, just to mention a few). These NGOs fail in their alleged purpose of defending the human rights of Indigenous women. They rather act as accomplices to the repression against the people of Eloxochitlán.

attacked them. As a result of the attack, professor and journalist Fernando Palacios Chazares and various others were gravely injured. Until now, the perpetrators remain in impunity. Manuel Zepeda Cortes also used heavy machinery in the river that runs through our municipality to remove large quantities of rock and sand from big landholdings that he obtained with municipal resources. This has generated a climate of discomfort in the municipality. Thus, the family has attempted at all costs to retain local control in our municipality, protecting their previous interests in the PRD party and now in the Morena party.

As a result of the conflict on December 14th of 2014, two people died, while automobiles and houses were damaged. For this, our *compañerxs* remain incarcerated or with outstanding orders of arrest. As all the necessary evidence has been presented for the relevant investigations, the judicial authorities have moved very slowly with the process, for which we ask the government to revise the advancement of the cases. Those detained and the others with orders of arrest have continually confirmed their innocence.

ex-municipal administrator professor Eleazar Bravo Fuentes. Their pretext for the attack was that the then municipal president, Alfredo Bolaños Pacheco, was not using the resources adequately to benefit the municipality. In reality, Manuel Zepeda Cortes ex- municipal president, sought to obscure the gifting of the money to works of his construction company, which he had started during his time as municipal president.

It is important to note that under his command, the repression and violation of the human rights of members of the community assembly who don't pertain to his political line were extensive. In February of 2011, he orchestrated the burning of a truck belonging to UCOCAM (Unión de Comunidades Campesinas Marginadas). On the 30th of the same month, Manuel Zepeda Cortes along with his followers, using sticks, rocks and machetes, attacked *compañerxs* of the community assembly that were carrying out a *Faena* (community works project) in the neighborhood of Puerto Rosete. On November 20th of 2012, as *compañerxs* gathered in an autobus in Puente de Fierro, to travel to Mexico City to commemorate the anniversary of the tragic death of Ricardo Flores Magón, hooded men

Against this long list of crimes committed by Manuel Zepeda and his violent group, legal complaints have been submitted to different judicial bodies regarding the violations of human rights. However, the response have been filled with irregularities, delays, the loss of records, reclassification of crimes, and the protection and guarding of these individuals. This is to say, justice of the state and human rights organizations are clearly on the side of those who repress the community of Eloxochitlán.

The last serious offense that took place is what brings us to the current situation. On December 14, 2014, an assembly was organized to elect the municipal authorities including the municipal mayor. This is a periodic celebration under the responsibility of the community assembly, who embodying the electoral system, discuss and decide who will be named as representatives of the people. That day, Manuel Zepeda Cortés, together with his violent group, those serving as his municipal police and who had taken the municipal presidency a month before, assaulted members of the community assembly with firearms. As a result of the attack, seven members of the community

**Three More Years of Harassment and
Abuse of Power in San Antonio Florechitlán
de Flores Magón, Oaxaca**

assembly were injured from bullet wounds. The others managed to arrest the leader of the attack and his son, Manuel Zepeda Lagunas, who was in possession of a firearm. He was given alive to the state police. Hours later he died under uncertain circumstances. Without proof of the crime, the Government of the State of Oaxaca and the cacique Manuel Zepeda named 35 members of the assembly, amongst them Miguel, guilty of the death of Manuel's son.

At the moment they delivered Manuel Zepeda Lagunas alive, the first seven members of the community assembly were detained in the municipality of Huautla de Jiménez; six of them municipal authorities that brought the detained Manuel Zepeda Lagunas and another that accompanied one of the injured. A year and eight months after their arrest, they remain incarcerated in the prison of Ixcotel, Oaxaca, without any resolution to their legal situation. Furthermore, to this date, there hasn't been any advance in the legal process of those who were injured by gunfire, who have directly named Manuel Zepeda, his family and followers culpable.

After the culmination of the three-year municipal period, 2014-2016, ten *compañerxs* of the community assembly remain imprisoned in the penitentiaries of Ixcotel, Cuicatlán and Etna, Oaxaca. Furthermore, arrest orders remain outstanding against nineteen of our *compañerxs*. This is the result of a municipal conflict on December 14th, 2014, between people of the municipality, in a dispute over control of the municipal palace and the naming of the municipal mayor.

The municipal palace had been previously taken through violence by a group using sticks and firearms, lead by the professor/brothers: Vicente, Vidal, and Manuel Zepeda Cortes (the latter being the ex-municipal president for the three years 2011-2013). Their intention was to retain power in order to hide the embezzlement of 23 million pesos carried out in complicity with the

As such, 94 years after his assassination, his ideals still resonate with us. Above all is the quest for justice and dreams of happiness, walking together with our brothers and sisters that now, everywhere on earth, live incarcerated in penitentiaries, attempting to maintain their wings that they have sought to break. To you all, it must be mentioned, we will not forget you!

Equally, today we remember those that day in and day out struggle against confinement toward freedom, to them go these words of remembrance, of memory, shouting, demanding...

Freedom for the Political Prisoners of
Eloxochitlán de Flores Magón!
Prisoners to the Streets!

Miguel Peralta Betanzos
Reclusorio San Juan Bautista, Cuicatlán,
Oaxaca
11/21/2016

After these detentions, a hunt was initiated against the assembly, resulting in five more being detained, four men and one woman (three in Cuicatlán, one more in ETLA, and the woman in Tanivet, Oaxaca). In addition, various families have been forced to leave the community, a media campaign has been initiated based on lies, and again the Zepeda group has taken power, returning with greater intensity the climate of violence, harassment, and impunity in the community.

NOTE OF CLARIFICATION

The peculiar thing is that after this attack and the consequences already mentioned, Manuel Zepeda and his daughter, Elisa, began a campaign of victimization in their favor. The campaign has been supported by innumerable human rights groups that, without knowing the background of the conflict, have stood up for their electoral representation in the community and have constructed a discourse around the repressors as defenders of human rights. In the case of Elisa, a defender of the rights of Indigenous women. This is completely false, but a strategy well known to win over public opinion. Anyone who is questioned inside of the community of Eloxochitlán, can testify that neither Elisa nor her father Manuel have stood up once for human rights. On the contrary, they are an integral part of the repression, theft and plundering of resources. They are the ones who have planted fear, who have brought the military into the community, who have shot at the community, who have closed the roads, and who have maintained a media and police siege against the members of the assembly that still live in the community.

This is a commemoration (not to memorable dates but to a life filled with rebellion) to all the ungovernable and maladjusted that have battled the state in its purest essence, capitalism, militarism, domination and oppression, against the industrialization of thought, whatever its forms or modes. Why not also say against injustice and coercive justice.

Taking brief account of the damages, especially remembering the compañerxs that have had their lives snatched in the cages of human misery, we remember those because their spirits have spread the pathway of freedom. In particular Ricardo Flores Magón, as Librado Rivera told us in a letter in 1923, where he spoke of the assassination of Magón in the Leavenworth penitentiary:

“If his sudden death deprived him of seeing his cherished ideals of freedom, love and justice, those dreams of happiness didn’t disappear with him: they live as beacons of light illuminating the minds of humanity that suffer the torture of hunger and misery”.

everything reeks and tastes of control, but from all this imposition, we try to build in every instant, here and there on the outside, a free space where smiles sprout again. Certain, hollow-eyed, maladjusted, we go out into the starry nights to walk, leaving our footprints on the wall of adversity.

Thank you for your sincere complicity, compas.

Sending energy to the *compañero* prisoners on hunger strike, don't falter.

Down with the prison walls

October 2, there is much yet to be done

M

On July 30th, 2015,
Pedro Peralta was released
after paying a fine. This did not mark the end
of his judicial process, as he remains
in a probational period
for another year.

After 2 years, 11 months and 17 days of unjust incarceration, we want to share with you that July 16th I received notice that I have been found guilty of the crime of carrying a weapon for exclusive military use. I say again never have I touched, seen or known such a weapon. I am sure that this verdict intends to strike a blow against our struggle as a community assembly.

Despite the sufficient evidence provided for my unconditional freedom, much of the evidence was rejected, including the statement of the municipal police commander who detained me, where he narrated the real acts, contradicting the crimes that they have attributed to me.

It is clear that my entire judicial process, like many others, was full of irregularities permitted by the corruption that exists between the judge of Huautla, the judge of Cuicatlán, the eighth circuit court of Oaxaca, together with the state of Oaxaca, Manuel Zepeda Cortés, Eleazar Bravo Fuentes, and David Tello Delgado. Since 2011, these people have generated violence in our community. I knew that

*Statement of Pedro Peraltá Affter
His Release*

“Freedom doesn’t exist when the expression of thought is prohibited.”

B. Traven

October 2, to the fallen, to the murdered, to the disappeared, you are not forgotten

October 2, Justice

Greetings to each and every one of you who have taken the time to hear these words. It is also my desire to send you a fraternal embrace wherever you are, be it in your daily resistance against the imposition of everyday life; in the schools, decolonizing knowledge; in the appropriation of space; in the streets making harmony out of noise; in the daily confrontation against the system’s minions; in cybernetic space, injecting and sharing the virus of rebellion; in the fields and communities, cultivating the seed of disobedience; or in your jobs, collectivizing and sharing work, without a boss, of course, and to those who with their silence also fight, though I don’t believe in that.

It’s been very complicated for me to share these words; all of the sudden I imagine how you imagine what it is to be locked up; that

October 2nd

The glimmer of light leaks
Splintering the bars of the long night
And obscuring the cowardliness

Above the walls, the prisoners' plow
Will furrow deeply through
The illusion of freedom

Our barefeet covered in mud
Will trample the age of oppression
And overthrow the cages
Of human misery

The black star radiates life
Covering our hearts with its cloak's
shadow
The spring of sadness and injustice
That we drink day after day
Will explode with the sounds of
rebellion

We will sigh and we will shout
In front of the oasis of joy
And the streets will have a fragrance
Faint and mysterious
Like that of the orchids

Miguel Peralta

from the moment of my arrest, the struggle for my freedom was going to be complicated because the dominant justice system does not exist for the people. Rather it exists for those who have political and economic power. Because of this, I know that the people create justice. It is within the people.

I will continue to struggle for the truth as I have done during the years of my incarceration. I will continue proclaiming that during the moment of my detention I was physically and psychologically tortured by Manuel, Vicente, Vidal Zepeda Cortés, Magdalena Lagunas, Alfonso García, Wilfrido Hernández and Francisco Romero. At this moment, they illegally and illegitimately continue to hold power in our community. Despite that my torture was documented by the *Fiscalía Especializada de Delitos de Trascendencia Social* and by Código DH, in Oaxaca, the Mixed Judge of Huautla de Jiménez, again taught us that justice is bought and sold. According to him, the torture that they exercised upon me was not to obtain a confession. However, that is not the truth. In reality they tortured me to fabricate crimes against me and to generate fear in the community as many people didn't agree with their abuse of power.

My freedom is only one step in a long struggle that has been accompanied by my family, friends, collectives and people in solidarity that are against injustices and believe in the self-determination of the people. Without all of you, without your support, my freedom would not have been possible. I thank you and I call on you to continue struggling for the unconditional freedom of the other nine prisoners of the community assembly of Eloxochitlán de Flores Magón. If we do not begin to speak of justice, there will not be freedom nor the cancellation of arrest warrants.

Never Forgive, Never Forget!
Freedom to all of my compañeros of the
community assembly of Eloxochitlán!
Freedom to the political prisoners!

Pedro Peralta

We will practice our custom, we will raise our voice against the ambitions of power and wealth.

Let's chat, let's get together, we still have a lot to do.

Let's struggle together.

So that they don't intimidate us with their police and surveillance.

We have to shake off all that limits us.

I want to think that you are busy; busy sharpening your machetes and hoes.

Here, we will remain attentive for your call.

To the call of the snail to continue our struggle for freedom.

From Cuicatlán
Miguel Angel Peralta Betanzos
April 30, 2016

*Compas, Are You There? Are You Still Alive?
Letter to the Assembly After A Year in Prison*

I do not hear the sound of the conch shell, I cannot distinguish the footprints on the road.

I do not hear you cheerfully talking as you walk to your neighborhoods after an assembly.

I do not see you joining hands to work together

Rather, I sense much fear, indifference, and much anguish.

Desperation, too much uncertainty.

We know justice is enforced by them depending on their political and economic interests.

We do not accept the manner in which they impose their forms of government, trying to give off an image of which they are not, hiding themselves behind political parties and nongovernmental organizations that sustain their spectacle.



At the end of October 2015, Brigida Bautista Guerrero was detained in Huautla de Jiménez, making a total of 12 prisoners and making it clear that the orders of arrest continue against an endless number of sympathizers of the assembly.

The names of the 12 detained are:

Brigida Bautista Guerrero, Wilfrido Salazar, Fernando Gavito, Herminio Monfil, Jaime Betanzos, Rubén Cerqueda, Omar Morales, Alfredo Bolaños, Eraclio Pineda, Miguel Ángel Peralta, Eleuterio Pineda and Ismael

Reyes

Freedom to them all!

To the Indigenous people of the world
To the national and international press
To the political, popular and
revolutionary organizations
To the human rights bodies

Brothers and Sisters, my word is simple
and true.

When in office, Manuel Zepeda Cortes
(responsible as the principal authority,
as the first in charge, as the father of
our community) for three years always
had the same thought, always saying the
same words.

He never looked at the people with
respect. When he was asked for a little
support in the house of the people, he
would quickly pride himself and return
the word. He returned with words that
were very hurtful: "Do not ask me for
anything. There where you gather every
Sunday, there they will give you the
support that you ask of me."

He always behaved in the same manner,
never coming from his heart: "Turn
around and look at me and I will receive
you." "We work together and we are

We miss the people that we value, we think
about them.

We sleep with the moon and we fall in love with
freedom waiting for a new dawn.

We struggle, endure, resist.

Fraternal greetings to those that have shown
their solidarity this year.

*What is Time When We Spend it All in Jail?
Writing After a Year in Prison*

We dance with the shadow, we play
with our dreams and we laugh.
We walk on the celestial sphere.
We cry in silence.
Sometimes until in life we are dead.
We sing and rebel against their walls
and iron bars.
We feed ourselves from the trash that
society discards and that we recycle.
We sharpen our senses.
Everyday we destroy that which is
established and we disassemble
reality.
We get mad at our spirit and with our
compañerxs, but not daily.
We take steps on the tightrope of
punishment, we draw faces in the
clouds.
We work so that the days are more
bearable, and out of necessity.
We always look to the sky, but also
where we walk.
We hear voices, we speak with them
and we see faces in the darkness.
We enjoy the flight of the birds, we
love life, we always find ourselves in
the waiting room.

Justice, family visit or freedom? Who knows?

united”. There was no change in the pride of
his heart, he didn’t seek to find a common bond
in our hearts.

He acted like this, always saying the same thing.

If he had love for the people, he would have utilized
the simple word from his heart for the people. As
such, he would have been better. That is what I
want to say.

Herminio Monfil Avendaño, Ixcotel, Oaxaca
May 26th, 2015

Freedom to the Political Prisoners!
Down with the Prison Walls!
Peace With Justice and Dignity!

Amidst the context reported in the investigation of *Subversiones*, and after the events of December 14th; on April 30th, 2015, Miguel Peralta Betanzos was detained, son of the already imprisoned Pedro Peralta and member of the recognized community assembly as well as a graduate of the National School of Anthropology and History. His arrest, opens up a lot of questions that again make clear the threads of power mobilized against members of the community assembly that defend the self-determination of the people and openly denounce tyranny and its accomplices. His close *compañerxs* denounced the events by means of the following communiqué.

Detention of Miguel Peralta Betanzos

Like that, they decided to search other beings with light to initiate not a flood, but a great fire, to invent a new freedom...

MM
February 2016

Leisure was confused by the situation. Seeing so much injustice, he sympathized with Time and with the other beings in the box, helping them plant the seeds. He waited for the seeds to sprout and grow into giant trees. Their roots began to overreach the cement. Little by little the clouds condensed causing intense rain. The box was flooded and destroyed into pieces. At first, those who didn't know of the seeds, were frightened as they had never seen drops of water. This was because the dragonflies, in charge of making it rain, were also in the box. But those who carried the light, encouraged them to leave. They managed to leave unharmed, thinking that they were already free.

Some went away, initiating their lives and journeys individually. Others began to search a pathway together with Time and Leisure. However, as they advanced, they realized that there were other beings that were called "society" who were not free. They lived as prisoners in a giant magnetic bubble. They had security cameras everywhere. Furthermore, they were enslaved by television, greed, and power, blinded by money and their daily diet consisted only of junk food.

To the government of the state of Oaxaca
To the media
To the defenders of human rights of the people of Oaxaca
To the human rights organizations

We denounce the events of April 30th, 2015, in the center of Mexico City, that took place in the following manner: At approximately 5:30 pm, in the workplace of our *compañero*, individuals without identification, uniforms or arrest warrants, tried to detain him. The people around witnessing the act stopped the detention. Miguel Peralta, was protected in a local store, while the same individuals were questioned by people in the vicinity. Since the detention of Miguel Ángel Peralta Betanzos was blocked, the three individuals identified themselves as police of the state of Oaxaca. They called for backup of approximately thirty Mexico City police, who violently entered the store, destroying it and threatening the people inside. Miguel Ángel Peralta Betanzos was kidnapped and was forced into a private car with plate number 237UMY, headed in an unknown direction. This was the last time they had contact with Miguel. Several hours passed without the knowledge of his whereabouts—not in an Attorney General's office, nor a hospital.

They only knew of the situation through an article at <http://www.fotosnoticias.com/>, where they manipulated the information against our *compañero*.

We name the ex-president of Eloxochitlán de Flores Magón, Manuel Zepeda Cortés, along with the State Agency of Investigation and the Attorney General of Mexico City responsible for the physical and psychological integrity of our *compañero*. We demand his immediate freedom, and the clarification of the irregularities of the judicial process of Miguel Ángel Peralta Betanzos as well as the larger case of Eloxochitlán de Flores Magón.

Sincerely,

Friends, family members and collectives in solidarity with the assembly of Eloxochitlán de Flores Magón.

make no sound and to enter the cell slowly. He then realized it was Time, whom he was searching for before entering the box.

Time asked not to be destroyed and began telling Leisure how he had his freedom taken away and ended up in that place. He said: “I found out you were tracking me. I searched for transportation to leave far away from the universe, but in my escape I was intercepted by a command of vultures who were surveying the space. They brought me here without my understanding of why. They beat me during the whole journey, and after many punches, they told me it was my turn to sicken inside this place. They said that I had to get into their thoughts and make sure that at every instant they were thinking of me. In the box, I have known many beings. We have talked. You too have seen what happens in this place. I have lived here and I cannot obey the vultures, you have to help us leave”.

“Look”, Time said to Leisure, as he showed him some very tiny seeds that he removed from his bag. “Take these above and search for those who bring the light inside. They will know where and when to plant them”.

But something more evil existed inside the box. The vultures sang a hymn of war and worshipped a three colored cloth every Monday. Furthermore, they made them repeat a phrase, "It is always better to be quiet than say too much when it comes to criticism". They all kept silent, nobody dared to say anything, much less rebel. Nobody.

After seeing this, Leisure furthered his journey even deeper into the box taking stock of all of the beings as they struggled day in and day out to survive. He discovered that some saved capsules that they ingested when their emotions were mixed causing a very weird effect, what they called "laughter". It was some type of mental intoxication. Others, held inside a small light which would guide them to the exit of that place. But they were always waiting to act.

He continued his journey and came across a place they called the "punishment cell". He walked slow as it was a very dark place, humid and quieter than the other spaces. Soon, he crossed sight with two very intense eyes that gleamed in the dark. He still did not know how this being could see him, but he was asked to

[72]

Brothers and Sisters, Are you Alive? Writings From Prison



[37]

lives, there was something they called work or self-exploitation. They worked sitting down. They created artwork that was taken outside the box to be sold at very high prices, not comparable to what they were paid.

The vultures were those in charge of surveilling each step, each blink of the eye of the inhabitants of that box, those who could enter and leave, those that had keys. Their toenails were very long, some skinny and others fat, their mouths were large and ugly, they smelt rotten. They always wore black vests and brought with them a kit that consisted of a tear gas canister, a short club and handcuffs. They wished for the death and decomposition of every inhabitant, for the flesh and consciousness to be devoured centimeter by centimeter of those beings that they had incarcerated.

In the cement box there were many illnesses and they didn't have healthy food. Everything was controlled. Their emotions crisscrossed everywhere: sadness, anger, rage, euphoria, hate, vileness, disdain and exhaustion. Surfeit. All of these emotions compounded and were eating at the beings until they became cement. That is why the box was growing and growing.

little until he was able to completely enter the box. Once inside, he returned to his original size but he was now invisible. He began to walk inside the box without being seen. He was able to observe different spaces, all divided by steel bars and locked with padlocks. He also saw that there was a diversity of fauna; buzzards, crickets, beetles, mice, dragonflies, fireflies, butterflies, fleas, many bed bugs, flies, spiders, ants, cockroaches and birds.

Other beings could be seen everywhere. They were the majority. They took on different forms: sometimes human remains, guards, other criminals, accused, prisoners. That is how they had been classified amongst all of the fauna that lived inside the cement box. They spoke different languages and they were of different cultures, some whistling to communicate. Surely they were in this place for various reasons. One reason is because destiny had put them in the wrong place without them knowing of their immediate future. Many others were there because some wealthy and powerful beings wanted control of their lives and had sent them there to try to severely punish them. Injustice is the rule of law. They nearly all had the same activities, everyday was monotonous. They had not seen the rain nor felt the wind, harmony didn't exist. Of the various activities that consumed their

After being incommunicado, Miguel was taken to a prison that didn't correspond to his case in the municipality of Tlaxiaco, Oaxaca, while the rest of his *compañerxs* have been held in the prison of Ixcotel. There he wrote his first letter and since then has written small reflective pieces which we have reproduced below.

He, like some of his incarcerated *compañerxs*, is considered an "Indigenous prisoner" because he belongs to a community that speaks Mazateco. This, among other things, has generated more ambiguity in his legal process. However, Miguel recognizes himself as Indigenous, as heir of the Indigenous traditions that he defends.

In regard to the judicial situation. After the Judge of Huautla de Jiménez, Oaxaca, issued the verdict on May 7th, Miguel's defense has filed two appeals to demand his freedom. Supposedly they had to resolve the appeals within three months. However, the Judge of Huautla did not allow the process to advance stopping the paperwork from being sent to the courts in the city of Oaxaca. To this date, they have deferred numerous hearings due to the failure of the Judge of Huautla to act. Because of this, we can say that his case is in permanent recess.

To Zuco and Doña Mary

One day Leisure felt very restless; he was completely imbalanced inside, he lacked a gear, longing to kill Time. But Time, always so insightful and astute, knew that Leisure was plotting his disappearance without leaving a trace. With this in mind, Leisure set out on a long trip to find Time. In his search, he crossed various galaxies, salt deserts, kilometers of frozen water. He searched for Time in his dreams, in cosmic valleys, in deep caverns. He utilized heat and movement sensors to find Time and he did not find him.

Until one night, due to exhaustion and a dream he had, he walked very slowly beginning to doze off. Soon he closed his eyes and he bumped into a cement box. He picked it off the ground, observed it carefully and shook it. To his astonishment he heard weird sounds coming from the box, sound he'd never heard in his life.

He realized that there was life inside the box and decided to enquire. Leisure, schemed on how to enter the box. With a little bit of magic he made himself small, very small, the size of a drop of water. He seeped in little by

Letter from May 4th, 2015

After four days imprisoned in this cell where there are three of us, we only have the right to receive lunch, a meal, a tea or coffee at night, and one phone call if we have enough luck to have a calling card. The space in which we are located measures two meters wide and two meters long, including a bathroom and sink. Only through a hole of about 20 centimeters by 12 centimeters can we see the other *compañerxs* carrying out their activities, making bags, hand crafts, hammocks, doing woodwork, as well as those that play basketball. We are not allowed to leave this cell.

The situation that I find myself in is the result of the cacique Manuel Zepeda Cortés who has for the last three years (what we have always opposed) robbed the natural resources of our community extracting rock, gravel, and sand from the Petlapa river. He has destroyed hills in the neighborhoods of Agua Torcida and Las Trancas in order to grind down the rocks. Like that he has made a full business inside of the municipality, monopolizing

To continue, we reproduce a story, “The Drop”, that appeared in February of 2016, with the legends that are included here and that seemed important for us to conserve.

Compas: Here we send you a story that Miguel wrote. He says that he could not respond to the letters from the last few months because suddenly it doesn’t lift his spirits to do so. He has thus decided to respond to the letters in this manner, trying to share with you a little bit of what he is living through right now. He sends his greetings and has asked us to tell you that you are all seeds that leisure and time have found, in solidarity, to leave this cement box...your words have given him strength to resist and not allow the vultures to eat him.

Especialy and with love to Pat and Ver, Ed, *compas* in Costa Rica, Les Trois Passants, Red Contra Represión, CNA Mexico, my lawyers, the *compas* that participated in “Solidaridad en la piel IV” (Tattoo artists, groups, tattooed, organizers), Jovenxs Mazatecxs in Huautla, *compas* of the free media, *compas* from Che, *compas* of jeikol, and my other brothers, for being attentive to my situation, for writing and for not forgetting.

the political-community system of Eloxochitlán de Flores Magón. He has done this through the indiscriminate use of violence, intimidation, buying of votes, using social programs discriminately, and the systematic persecution of the opposition. Furthermore, he has manipulated information in complicity with the local and state media.

During the three years of his rule, 2011-2013 there was a high number of human rights violations that have instigated preliminary inquiries and complaints, but have always been protected by the government of Oaxaca who we also name responsible. Terrible cases continue to go unpunished, like what occurred November 20th, 2012, in Puente de Fierro. We were ambushed by Manuel, the then municipal president, along with the police and his family that accompanied him. My father was detained, tortured and imprisoned on August 11th, 2011 and until now, remains in the prison of San Juan Bautista Cuicatlán. His process has been unjust since the moment of his detention, which has been plagued by irregularities and corruption.

After his three years as municipal president, the community began to walk together as

To the community of Magón

The new prison system
Did not intimidate the prisoners
Because the skinny *calaca* accompanied them
And with them she rioted.

The prosecutor kept crying
Because he lost his position
And together with the director Rigor
With his reforms regressed

Happily she returned to the afterlife
Taking with her the prosecutor
Liberating the prisoners
Dreaming of a better world...

Justice in Oaxaca
In the hands of the general attorney
Was sold to the *calaca*
In exchange for governorship

Becoming governor
Everything changed
Even the IEEPO
Was laid to waste

With such repression
The weak and skinny *calaca*
Changed the institution
Of the patron saint of section 22

The conscious skeleton
Of such regret
Attempted with destruction
To struggle against the governor and his
squad

The *calaca* united the prisoners
And Eloxochitlán stood up
Before they were taken
Also to the graveyard

A libertarian she became
Because she had conviction
Returning justice

people with a little bit of peace and tranquility, developing ourselves through our everyday activities, struggling against latent injustices. In September of 2014, the state of Oaxaca, through the superior court notified there was a debt of 21 million pesos from the 2013 fiscal year. This was meant to divert the attention in the community generating a new conflict against the elected authorities of the community assembly of Eloxochitlán de Flores Magón. They forcefully took the municipal building with 80 people, making the municipal president sign a letter of resignation that was never officially ratified in congress.

From this derived the events of December 14th in which six *companerxs* of the assembly were injured by gunfire in different parts of their bodies (chest, neck, head, legs) while they were exercising their right of public expression and political participation. During the same event, two people died of which 34 *companerxs* of the assembly and I were charged with the crime. Eight of these *companerxs* are incarcerated in the prison of Ixcotel, Oaxaca for crimes of which we are innocent. Due to the greed, thirst for power and money, Manuel Zepeda Cortes has resorted to extensive violence in the community.

Although I am in this place, I feel free because I know that I am innocent. These concrete walls never will be able to silence or calm my thirst for freedom. I appreciate the unconditional support of my family, my *compas* in DF, Oaxaca, Mexico, Colombia, France, and in whatever other place they are located. Greetings, we will see each other soon.

From the prison-church of Tlaxiaco where they can only evangelize the Dominicans.

NEVER FORGIVE, NEVER FORGET!
FREE ELOXOCHTLÁN DE FLORES MAGÓN!
FREEDOM TO THE POLITICAL PRISONERS!

**JORNADA POR LA LIBERTAD
DE MIGUEL PERALTA BETANZOS**

A 1 AÑO DE SER SECUESTRADO POR EL ESTADO

ACTIVIDADES:

- RODADA DE LA ENAH AL OKUPA CHE, 12:00PM.
- PROYECCIÓN DE LA DETENCIÓN DEL COMPAÑERO MIGUEL, ASI COMO UN VIDEO SOBRE EL CONFLICTO EN LA COMUNIDAD DE ELOXOCHTLAN DE FLORES MAGÓN.
- PRESENTACIÓN DEL LIBRO "LUCHA COMUNITARIA Y REPRESIÓN POLITICA EN ELOXOCHISTLAN" POR FANZINOTECA Y EDICIONES "LA SOCIAL"
- EXPOSICIONES DE GRÁFICOS EN SOLIDARIDAD CON MIGUEL.
- VENTA Y EXPOSICIÓN DE ARTESANIAS ELABORADAS POR MIGUEL Y LXS PRESXS DE LA ASAMBLEA COMUNITARIA.
- VENTA DE COMIDA VEGANA, BEBIDAS, MEZCAL Y TLAYUDAS.

OKUPA CHE
ESPACIO AUTÓNOMO DE TRABAJO-AUTOGESTIVO

30 DE ABRIL 2016

¡LIBERTAD A TODXS LXS PRESXS POLITICOS!

highest bidder and to the naive people that continue believing they are divine creatures. Besides everything, they utilize the spiritual discourse to confuse more people, trying to make them believe that there is peace in our community, that nothing is or has happened.

Not even paying for newspaper articles in the mainstream media, that are of course only interested in selling lies, will function. In our community, we know very well who are the herds that consume those lies. Either by threats, by political-economic commitments, or other interests. Though some people fall for these tricks. There will not be harmony in N'guixo without justice...and there will not be justice until they stop cooking lies.

We will never beg for freedom and justice!
The eleven prisoners of the community assembly to the streets!
Out with the state police and hired agitators from Eloxochitlán!

Miguel Ángel Peralta
From confinement, September 2015

The system that administers justice in Oaxaca is rotten, it reeks. We, as the community assembly of Eloxochitlán de Flores Magón, have many times denounced the abuse of authority and the violation of human rights to the Human Rights Defense of Oaxaca and to the Attorney General. However the response that we have received is prison, intimidation, threats, harassment, and repression from the political apparatus including municipal, state, and federal police and military.

As these systems weaken to the point of being obsolete, and as people who follow what is supposed to be our own internal normative systems, we have the right to political self-determination. Thus, within this context of injustice, we should put our energy towards utilizing our ancestral forms of community justice.

After seven days of incarceration in Tlaxiaco I will tirelessly repeat that my detention was not an act under “judicial norms” in which they pride themselves. Rather every moment has been full of irregularities, since the moment in which they accused us of a crime that none of us committed. During

my detention, the people that detained me never identified themselves nor presented an arrest warrant. The car in which they took me did not have a license plate typical of the police of Oaxaca and now I know that they were two unmarked cars. I was kidnapped and held incommunicado for more than 20 hours, while I was taken to Tlaxiaco. They never put me before a judge but took me directly to the church-prison of power, where I was abandoned. However, I will never put my head down until my freedom is achieved along with the *companerxs* that are locked up in Ixcotel and Cuicatlán, together with those on the outside supporting us with much rage and solidarity raising their voice. A fraternal hug to you all. I appreciate it!

Miguel Angel Peralta Betanzos
Tlaxiaco, May 6, 2015

Freedom to the political prisoners!

In the face of the persecution and harassment that our families continue to suffer at the hands of the Attorney General, the Secretary of Public Security and the Secretary of Government of the State of Oaxaca, our *compañeras* and *compañeros* of the community assembly of Eloxochitlán will not keep quiet. We will not tire ourselves denouncing them, nor will we stop resisting their tricks and lies. They intend to impose this truth by force and at all costs to maintain control of our people. They want us submissive, but we have already said to them and we repeat, we will not obey.

We again reject the wave of atrocities (arrests, fabrication of crimes, harassment, intimidation, threats, usurpation of power, dispossession) that they continue exercising against the members of the assembly. We denounce again those puppets who continue flaunting their power, authority, and money in our community.

Tranquility, peace, and harmony will arrive to Eloxochitlán once we reach for and reconstruct the full freedom we are struggling for. Not by trying to impose positions of power where there is nothing more than hierarchies and false representation.

We know well that in the kitchen “La Chuparroza”, they continue cooking lies in clay pots. Their ambition is to sell them to the

Prisoners to the streets!
Down with the prison walls!

Miguel Peralta, Member of the Community
Assembly of Eloxochitlán de Flores Magón
July 4th, 2015

Silence in the darkness sings and dances
the *son* of freedom to all those
incarcerated...

The water runs, spills and disturbs the
crickets that prepare for rebellion...

The birds in their cages wake up from
their lethargy and start chirping...

The silence has been broken.

The fury, the rage, and the anger will
become partners of feelings

And slowly threaten the destruction of
thought

Miguel Peralta

If we expect the police have arrested
innocent people, we must take away the
keys.

Even if the judge gets lost in the mountains,
the asphalt should not obscure our freedom.
The prosecutor will investigate to turn off
the light and cover up the sun with a
smokescreen in the promenade of lies.

Today my judicial situation was decided and
once again the man of money and power,
threw a party, organized a circus, and fed
the dead.

Each night in my dreams in the reflection of
the water on the patio of the prison, the
injustices fade, but after they grow like
snowballs.

My freedom is restricted by a very small
space that does not permit me to walk
together with you, but the eyes of my mind
and my spirit flicker, touching the *compas*.
Thank you to everyone who has showed
their solidarity in various forms demanding
my freedom! We are ten and we all demand
our freedom!

May 7th, 2015, Tlaxiaco, Oaxaca
Miguel Ángel Peralta Betanzos

To destroy because the walls of the prison
must fall!

Kjuabynachoón! Justice!

Four Days After the Formal Order of
Imprisonment

To the submission under which a group in power wants to bury us, attempting to homogenize the community system, imposing people to governmental power, and making the community a business, appropriating and exploiting the natural resources of Eloxochitlán de Flores Magón: WE RESIST!

The majority of the people in our community have been humiliated, violated and repressed. In spite of that, we are daily losing our fear. Many will remain in the path, others will side with the enemy so they are not frowned upon, there will be offerings of peace, of course others will mark us, slander us, fabricate crimes against us...

The individuality of each person-xitaá is permeated by water and rock *naxinanda* that protects us. These are the foundations the struggle now brings together, with the sound of the conch shell, and the search for the pathway toward freedom amongst the fog that covers our mountains.

Greetings to the *compas* that are planting seeds everywhere so that a new pathway in our communities will sprout.

May 10th, 2015 Tlaxiaco, Oaxaca
From the cell of punishment
Miguel Angel Peralta

being punished for the simple act of thinking and acting differently from them, for seeing the world from another perspective, without frameworks, without being part of those who obey, those who blindly follow, the mediated spectacle. Because of these ideas, they have fabricated crimes that do not have any substance, with the purpose of extending the judicial processes, negating the hearings, and giving sentences that are inappropriate.

Thus, we have a direction, that is solidarity. Between the *compas* that share, think and act to reinvent freedom from the spaces where we find ourselves. Quietly the rebellion will sweep across those who live in the mountains and in the cities.

Compas, I send you a fraternal hug. I hope this will provide a grain of strength in the struggle that has reached our ears in the prison of San Juan Bautista Cuicatlán, Oaxaca, where like you, we find more than 100 people encaged.

Never will they chain our thoughts.

Complete solidarity with the hunger strike of
the Informal Coordination of Prisoners in
Resistance.

Freedom is not conquered from one's
knees, but rather on foot, returning blow
for blow, inflicting wound for wound,
death for death, humiliation for
humiliation, punishment for punishment.
Let the blood run, because that is the
price of freedom

Ricardo Flores Magón

We might not know each other in person, but I know that confinement is unjust, all confinement. *Compas*, this week I've learned that you have began a new phase of resistance. I imagine it will be a bit complicated due to the implications to your health, for the physical and mental fatigue. But I also know that the dreams of freedom will allow you to struggle with more strength, since the emotional fatigue is nothing compared to the effects of confinement: resistance!

I also know that you have agreed to carry out a hunger strike because you are already in different prisons being punished, segregated, caged, by the carceral system and the state. You are

[60]

What's up *Compañerxs*?

I would like to greet you by hand but unfortunately these four walls prevent that. Believe me that here where they have me incarcerated, it is not easy to bear the cold. They do not let me leave my cell to get sunshine. I am in a punishment cell. The food is very bad and I miss the food that is made in our community: the *quelitas* that our land produces and the tortillas my mother makes by hand. I also miss you all. I know that this struggle will not and has not been easy. We have stumbled many times, but we have also learned to get back up. We have faced many obstacles from the state because we are humble people with a big heart, an unwavering spirit, and common thought. I say "we" because I feel as if I am part of you, those who are struggling and resisting from the trenches: our community.

I hope that rage and courage, that necessity of us being together will soon not be diluted by words and that in practice we will continue demanding the freedom for our imprisoned *compañerxs*.

[49]

As you know, the enemy wants to see us all behind bars, to be the boss of our community, but he will not because his lies cannot be justified or sustained. It is well known that we have been singled out, and because of that we must take precaution, caring for each other. I think that what is most important now is that in spite of everything we learn to remain united; that would be the most difficult work for everyone, that we try to talk out our differences and continue this work forward. We cannot remain intimidated, although the threats are daily, we cannot stop. We walk together to our neighborhoods and municipal agencies.

I send my greetings to my friends, my cousins, uncles, aunts, to my family wherever they are, to my father, Pedro Peralta Carrilo, who remains in resistance from the prison of Cuicatlán with everything he has taught us; to the *compas* in Ixcotel, to the children, youth, women and to the grandmothers and grandfathers of the community assembly that keep us alive.

May 12th, 2015, Tlaxiaco
Miguel

confinement, I struggle against the heat that overwhelms my being. I find myself with three cell mates, along with other guests day and night accompanying us—bedbugs, fleas, spiders, cockroaches and ants that always collect the little bit of “food” (because that food cannot be called food) that falls to the floor.

Our pastime consists in imagining our freedom, singing, reading, thinking, thinking, and thinking of that freedom.

In these cells where the guards all are criminals. Always, everyday, we are segregated. But in this place, our mind, our imagination, and our spirit are ungovernable.

We will continue screaming for our freedom together with you all.

We appreciate your solidarity!

Freedom to the 10 political prisoners of
Eloxochitlán

After 33 days incarcerated
Down with the prison walls!

From the Prison in Cuicatlán

Here the concrete and iron bars rule.

These four walls that were one day white, now are eaten away by time. The archaeology can be observed of the beings that have been here, their names, their hieroglyphs, their telephone numbers, passwords, illegible letters, lines eroded in a series of 30, stains of cigarette smoke and of other smokes, drawings, chunks of gum encrusted on the walls.

I am quite calm because I am here close by my father, Pedro Peralta Carrillo, although I cannot talk with him, nor see him. With Pedro, we will struggle shoulder to shoulder for our freedom.

Up until now, he has spent 2 years and 9 months kidnapped by this system that attempts to silence us. However, we have a lot of strength because we nourish ourselves from the solidarity of our *compas*.

From the punishment cell in Cuicatlán, in the Cañada, Oaxaqueña, where apart from my



The wind blows, it is Monday evening at approximately seven o'clock, 5-25-2015. Just a few minutes ago the rain stopped. I believe that the sky is clearing. I cannot see it but I imagine that is what is happening. I am contemplating the birds searching for food beneath the patio. I see them through the reflections in the water that the rain has left, a *compañero* is approaching the hole in the cell and like almost all of those that do this, he says the same phrase everyday, "Put in some effort, you are almost there, don't give up". From there he asks me what I am doing and I respond that I am reading a book about the Mazatecos of Inchaustegui. He asks me that I show him. With pleasure I do. He browses it, reads the lines. I observe him and his look says to me that he is interested in it, and he comments that reading is a good distraction, like walking, always searching a manner in which to leave this confinement, at least through the imagination. He says that before, the prisoners searched their forms, their therapy, to fight against this system. It was through gathering or buying rice, milled tortillas, remnants of bread. They threw it and the birds joined them. They were taking stock of whether they were birds, pigeons, or another type of bird. They gave them names and nicknames. It was a form of

talacheroooooooooos, alacheroooooooooosssssss, tala...

Like little sheep when the pastor calls to give them salt, they come when its their turn and the activities are distributed: recycle the trash, gather the toilet paper. German and Mario work the griddle, mop the floor. Carlos sweeps the corridor, Torres cleans the table, Ernesto cleans the pans. It is like this every day during the month. Everyone is trying to wake up with their activities. The music of the water begins, it drips, it runs, and it gathers in the buckets, every drop sounding like a drum. In the end, it is gone, and we stay, our bodies. I want to clarify that our spirits, thoughts, and dreams are free. Never do they obey the routine that is imposed by the system. They dissolve and trespass the bars, the walls, together with the water, accompanying the songs of the birds, joining the thunder and lightening in the sky.

And like that the day is gone...they have snatched it from us, they have robbed it from us...

that are in charge of the preparation of food open the kitchen. Thus begins the noise, the sound of spoons and pans, all in symphony. The birds also accompany them. Greetings of good morning begin to be heard, in the small corridor between the kitchen, the woodworking shop and the bathrooms.

Roll call at 7:00 am, always punctual and looking toward the floor. According to them, this is and represents discipline. After roll call, the tools are distributed between the bars. They open the woodshop, turn on the strainer, and the radio comes to life. Sometimes we can't distinguish between the actual sounds and the noise, never lacking someone that whistles a familiar song, or a *chilena* to bring in a little diversity. They also get together to share a cigarette in the smoking area, and to tell stories of things that happen on the outside. At the same time, the store is opened where you can acquire things for personal hygiene, soap, toothpaste, razors, loofa. Furthermore you can get cookies, chips, sandwiches, sweets, etc.

Around 7:30, the voice of whom is in charge is heard distributing the tasks of cleaning the bathroom, showers, corridor, and kitchen:

distraction, of living together with other beings, an escape from reality, flying together with them. Until one day, giving food to the birds became prohibited, "because these birds could bring messages" from the patio to the cell.

After telling me this, he said goodbye because they had seen him talking to me and he can be punished for that. This is how he makes his escape toward his dormitory, I hear, "there, tomorrow, I will tell you another story...".



I begin to undress the shadows.

Nights of hope.

In the cell my days and nights mature.

My spirit in the fog

I was awoken by the whistles of the people in
my town, they begin to gather.

I see the mighty river, slightly.

It is not enough that the firewood is consumed
in the fire and the tortilla is burned.

Against the oppressor it is necessary to sharpen
the hatred, and machetes.

The solitude also guards me.

There is too much silence in the journey.
The night is darker when the day breaks.
My sad routine every day consists of never-
ending dreams of freedom and justice!
Patiently, my spirit waits, dances, grows and
rebels.

Dreadful characters, the ones that become and
perform as guards: judge, boss, psychoanalyst,
foreman, protectors, hahahahaha...

Hidden forms of resistance in the prison of
Tlaxiaco:

Pretend to sleep and do not go to sign the
list
Laugh, talk, disturb role call, and when they
are giving orders.
Fart, whistle, imitate the guards and
director, make fun of them.
Smoke and eat in places not permitted.
Think from the first day of entry in forms of
escape.

Tlaxiaco

(The Prison) or center of social
rehabilitation? HAHHAHA

A space of segregation of the people-
individuals, of discrimination, of non-being,
of omissions, of those without rights, of bad
food without access to healthcare, much
less to develop sexuality, of isolation,
without education.

Always obeying orders, rules of “good
behavior or conduct”, of established
schedules and passing of lists, thus the
leaking of gas and spaces poorly distributed.
Better said without spaces for recreation, to
work, or to play sports. Of facilities in very
bad condition. Overall, a place of inmates
and prison guards, police, director, and of
snitches. Why not mention them?

According to the words of the director and of
the prison guards, we are in heaven but for
the others that are here and for those that
have been in other prisons, all prisons are
equal.
